

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 PANAMA 08106 130008Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00  
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 SAB-02 /059 W

-----112753 130010Z /70

O R 122325Z NOV 77 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4494

WHITE HOUSE NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 8106

WHITE HOUSE FOR HAMILTON JORDEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PBOR, PN

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS RESPONDS TO SENATORS' VISIT WITH ANNOUNCEMENT  
OF REFORMS

REF: PANAMA 8107

1. FOLLOWING A MEETING NOVEMBER 12 WITH SENATORS ROBERT BYRD (D-WVA), WALTER D. HUDDLESTON (D-KY), PAUL SARBANES (D-MD.), HOWARD METZENBAUM (D-OHIO), DONALD RIEGLE (D-MICH.), AND SPARK MATSUNAGA (D-HAWAII), GENERAL TORRIJOS ANNOUNCED TO THE PRESS A NUMBER OF REFORMS. THE MOST IMPORTANT WERE:

A. HE WOULD ASK LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO REVISE EMERGENCY DETENTION DECREES (342 AND 343) TO END SUMMARY DETENTION AND TRIAL IN TERRORISM CASES.

B. HE WOULD ALLOW THE RETURN TO PANAMA OF ALL POLITICAL EXILES, NUMBERING ABOUT 60, AFTER EXCHANGE OF TREATY RATIFICATIONS.

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C. HE WOULD, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION, DRAW UP A REVISED PRESS CODE TO ALLOW GREATER FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

2. IN ADDITION, TORRIJOS REITERATED THAT THE CLARIFICATION OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY AGREED TO LAST MONTH IN

WASHINGTON REFLECTS HIS VIEWS. HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SIGN IT IF NECESSARY, HE SAID. HE ALSO SAID THE MILITARY CREDITS AGREED TO WITH THE U.S. IN THE TREATY CONTEXT WOULD BE USED FOR PREPARING THE COUNTRY FOR CANAL DEFENSE AND FOR CIVIC ACTION, NOT FOR PURCHASING UNNEEDED WEAPONS.

3. TORRIJOS WAS LESS SPECIFIC ON HIS POLITICAL INTENTIONS THAN HE WAS ON THESE HUMAN RIGHTS AND TREATY-RELATED QUESTIONS. HE SEEMED TO HINT OF POSSIBLE GREATER POLITICAL FREEDOMS FOR THE COUNTRY, BUT KEPT HIS OPTIONS OPEN.

JORDEN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009